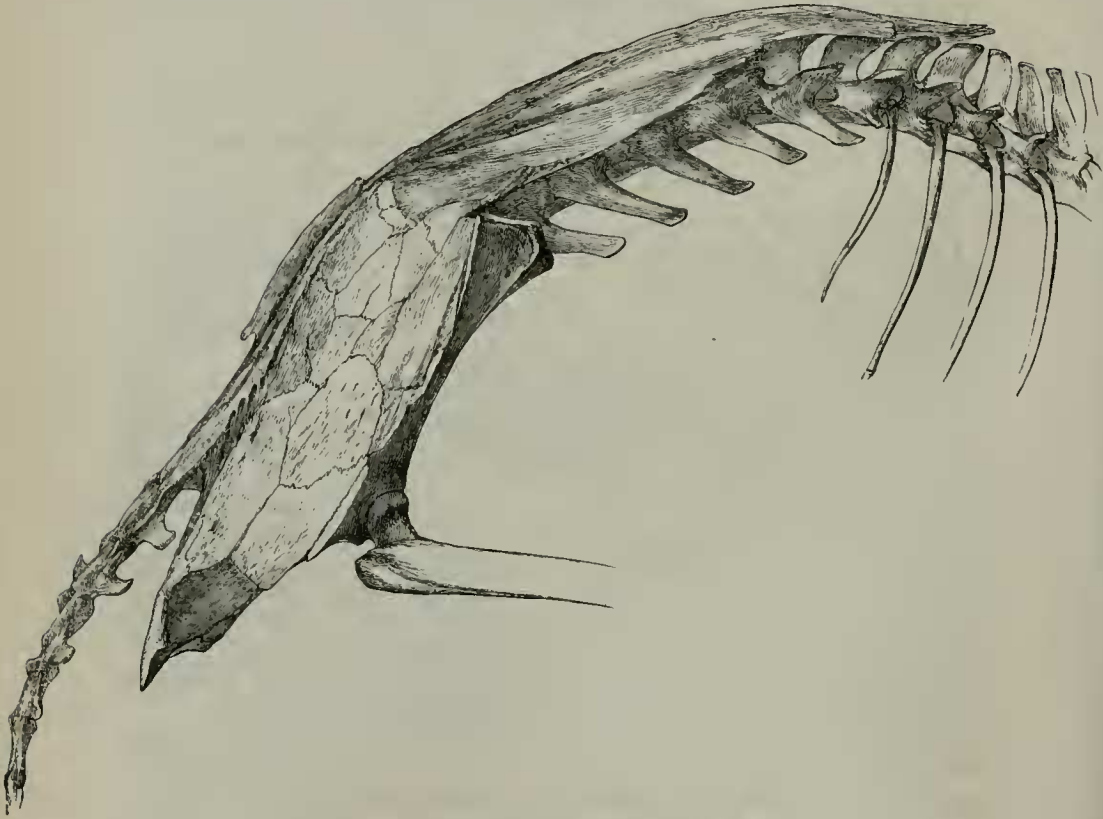


8. On the Bony Dorsal Shield of the Male *Tragulus kanchil*.
By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S.

Mr. Edward Gerrard the younger has prepared for the British Museum a beautiful skeleton of the male *Tragulus kanchil* which lately died in the Society's Gardens.

The skeleton is very like that of other ruminants; but it has the remarkable peculiarity of the lumbar vertebræ and pelvis being covered with an expanded thin bony plate, or, rather, a series of small irregular-shaped plates united together by a dentated suture into a dorsal and lumbar disk, apparently formed by the ossification of the lumbar fascia. This lies immediately on the upper surface of the dorsal muscles, and between them and the skin. The plate is attached by the whole length of the central line, and extends on each side considerably beyond the sides of the lumbar vertebræ and the pelvis.



Bony dorsal shield of *Tragulus kanchil*.

Mr. Gerrard informs me that it did not occur in a female *T. kanchil* that he had examined; so that it may be peculiar to the male sex.

M. Alphonse Milne-Edwards has figured a somewhat similar expansion covering the pelvis in the skeleton of *Tragulus napu* (see

Ann. des Sci. Nat. 1864, t. 4. f. 2). It appears to be common to the species of the genus *Tragulus*, but, I believe, does not occur in the genus *Meminna*. M. Alphonse Milne-Edwards (*loc. cit.* t. 10. f. 7) figures the pelvis of that animal without any bony disk.

April 8, 1869.

Dr. E. Hamilton, V.P., in the Chair.

A communication was read from Dr. George Bennett, F.Z.S., dated Sydney, January 26th, enclosing a copy of an article upon the Tuatera Lizard (*Sphenodon punctatum**) of New Zealand, contributed by him to the 'Sydney Herald' of January 19th, which was read to the Meeting. It appeared from this article that so recently as December 1851 this Lizard was abundant in one of the islands in the Bay of Plenty, in New Zealand. The island in question was stated to be one of four small volcanic islands, distant about eight miles from the coast and situated opposite to the mouth of the Wakataane river. The party of officers who visited it upon the occasion in question are stated to have collected in half an hour nearly forty of these Lizards of different sizes, varying from two feet long to three inches. They stated that the island seemed to be swarming with them and with another Lizard called the Moko-moko (*Tiliqua zealandica*). In the daytime these Lizards are seen basking themselves in the sun on the bare rocks. Noon is therefore the best time to visit the island. It was stated that there were four small islands, on two of which Tuateras are found. They are called Rurima and Montoki. The largest is about half a mile in circumference at high water. They are all of volcanic origin, and are scantily covered with soil, but it is sufficient to grow a few of the most hardy New-Zealand shrubs and creepers, among the latter of which was observed the delicate flower of the Pohne or Panapa (*Calystegia sepium*), the long fleshy root of which was formerly a source of food to the New Zealander. There was no fresh water on the island but what was contained in the crevices of rocks from rain.

The following papers were read:—

1. Note on *Pachybatrachus robustus*.

By ST. GEORGE MIVART, F.Z.S. &c.

I had the honour to read before the Zoological Society on the 12th of November, 1868, a paper which was published in the

* Olim *Hatteria punctata*. Cf. Gray, Ann. Nat. Hist. 4th ser. vol. iii. p. 167 (1869).—P. L. S.